

The home we are building together -

I have 15 minutes to share with you a glimpse of what could be...the what if...the dream of a different narrative for the children and youth here at Haven. There is a lot in my head and heart and this is just a glimpse, a drop in the bucket of the stirrings within me. And I know that what I share will take time. It's a journey, a process, and a building project that won't happen overnight, but I invite you to lean in, stay curious, join me in considering the possibilities of what God is calling us to create here for the children and youth of Haven.

Who am I?

To tell you a little about myself.

- I was born and raised in the bay area. Lived here all my life except my three years living in Oklahoma when I was in college. I grew up going to church.
- When I came back from college I became a youth minister in the church I grew up in and did youth minister there for 14 years.
- After that I started my own church(didn't mean to, kind of by accident).
- After that Don and I became part of Mosaic, a progressive faith community in Albany, for 11 years which closed earlier this year,
- which brought us to Haven in our search for a new faith community.

Besides my ministry experience, I also taught at a small private independent school for over 20 years. Grades pre-k-8th. And now I am at Prospect Sierra school doing the after school program, where I get to hang out with middle schoolers every afternoon.

There is a lot to my journey and I have done a lot of different things in church, but something that has always been a part of who I am, is my heart for children and youth. It is what I call my happy spot, where I can always find so much joy.

The Home we are building together

We are in the middle of a series titled the Home we are building together. And as Don and I have stepped into Haven it would seem like such an easy fit to have me come in and help with either the children or youth, and I can but I want to do more than just create something where the children go to on Sunday mornings.

I want to help create a culture here where we see the youth. I know we see them and hear them, but to see them and know them and have them more integrated in the life of the community and not just on the margins.

Invitation to a new way -

Here is the struggle, fear, uncertainty, that I often sense from parents... but we are a progressive, post-evangelical community. We are living outside the evangelical box that we grew up with, but we're not exactly sure what that means for our children

- As adults we have lived through this journey of deconstruction and explored the faith that we grew up with and found ourselves leaving a lot of it behind.
- While in the midst of this faith journey we have kids and, in our case, we dragged them along on this journey with the hope that they can learn and grasp a spirituality that is real and authentic for themselves.
- When it comes to children and youth in progressive churches, there is a lot still to be figured out.
- There is a tension of wanting them to grow up with knowledge and faith, but we don't want them to learn the teachings that we grew up with. We want them to know the bible, but not in the bible we grew up with, we want them to understand the deep, deep love of Jesus for their lives from a place of original blessing not original sin...
- So you see it isn't as easy as "and now the children and youth are dismissed." -and we send them "there" hoping they come back changed by what they are learning over there.

We are a small community so I think it matters even more that we do this communally, that we bring the children into our spaces and we enter into theirs. That we figure out this faith journey together. So that it can be something they experience and learn from us and we from them.

What does intergenerational look like within a faith community?

Leah labeled this gathering intergenerational. Today we are going to participate with the children in their Godly play experience. But I want to expand our understanding of what intergenerational is beyond this Sunday.

I want to set our intentions of what it means to be intergenerational.

Being intergenerational means:

- Creating a culture here where each one of us has a responsibility to care for these children.
 - We can all take time and invest in the lives of these young people.
 - We all have something to give of ourselves that can bless our children - who likes ice cream? Babysit, help them with homework, go to their sporting events, dance recitals, have families in your home for dinner.
 - I don't want to ask you to bring something that you are not, I just ask you to bring yourself and the God in you to love on these kids.
 - Teaching and learning can't just happen on every other Sunday for 30 minutes.
- Taking the posture that we can all learn from each other. We can learn from the children as much as they can learn from us.(examen prayer) We can learn from children and be reminded of the wonder and mystery of God.
- Seeing that having each other in our lives makes us better,(This one might be a hard sell, especially when they are crying, throwing a fit, or rolling their eyes at you)
 - They can make your life better and get you out of your comfort zone.
 - 7th grade Yosemite trip

How? Where do we start?

I know some of you think, that is what Jeanne is good at, gifted at, passionate about...that is true, but I believe this is something that is within us all. But I want to give you my secret this morning...so you can have the eyes to see children the way I do.

I will share my secret: I love being around young people because I feel closer to God, to the divine. The divine in them is so beautiful. It is so pure, full of joy. I learn from them what it means to be a child of God. They live in a way that they fully embrace who God created them to be.

I ask, I invite you to see the divine in these children.

Psalm 139:13-14

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Psalm 139:14 - It says wonderfully made: astounding, astonishing, awe-inspiring, awesome, breathtaking, extraordinary, fabulous, incredible, phenomenal, remarkable, spectacular, stupendous, supernatural, unbelievable, unimaginable

That is how I see children.

This is a big picture idea of the culture I dream of for Haven, but I also want to give you something to start with. Something I feel is easy and practical.

- Learn their names, know them by name, greet them by name,
- In our culture we have hello. A little meaningless and gets us off the hook of greeting someone by name. In other cultures their greetings hold so much more weight.
 - **Namaste** - the divine in me sees the divine in you
 - **Sawubona** - Susan David who wrote Emotional Agility says: "In South Africa, where I come from, "**sawubona**" is the Zulu word for "hello." There's a beautiful and powerful intention behind the word because "sawubona" literally translated means, "I see you, and by seeing you, I bring you into being."

That is my hope and intention behind learning their names and greeting them by name. That they can be seen and by seeing them we bring them into being.

I created a slideshow to introduce you to some of the children of Haven. Not all the children are here today and some in the slide show will be new to you.

As we go through the slide show can we read their names out loud together and as we do, think about the adjectives that describe these children.

Slide - Say the children's names out loud as we see their pictures.

Ephesians 3:16-21

I pray that out of God's glorious riches God may strengthen the children and youth at Haven with power through God's Spirit in their inner being, so that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith. And I pray that the children and youth, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all of the Haven community, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that they may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to God who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to God's power that is at work within us, to God be the glory in Haven and in Christ Jesus.

SLIDE ONE

Psalm 139:13-14

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

SLIDE TWO

Wonderfully made = astounding, astonishing, awe-inspiring, awesome, breathtaking, extraordinary, fabulous, incredible, marvelous, phenomenal, remarkable, spectacular, stupendous, supernatural, unbelievable, unimaginable